



Inside ICE

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ICE, Colombians Work Together To Dismantle Norte Valle Cartel

Around noon on October 29, thirty members of the Colombian National Police (CNP) special “Jungla” unit, working with the ICE Attaché Office in Bogotá, stormed a ranch in northwest Colombia. Following a firefight in which a Colombian officer was wounded, the CNP arrested Jhonny Cano-Correa, aka “Flechas” or “Santiago.” It was the latest victory in a 10-year battle that has



Jhonny Cano-Correa, aka “Flechas” or “Santiago,” was believed by Colombian officials to be the number three man in the Norte Valle Cartel at the time of his arrest on October 29.

led ICE to the heart of Colombia’s largest and most dangerous drug smuggling organization—the Norte Valle Cartel.

In the mid-1990s, legacy U.S. Customs agents in New York faced a puzzling question: How could a group of storefront money wire services be moving \$800 million to Colombia every year, a figure that was more than the total income of every Colombian in the city? To solve the riddle, the agents, members of the anti-money laundering El Dorado Task Force in New York, launched “Operation Wire Drill.”

The case began in earnest in August 1996, when the agents obtained a Geographic Targeting Order (GTO). This order required 22 licensed money-remitting firms and their representatives in the New York area to report information about the senders and recipients of all cash-purchased wire transmissions of \$750 or more to Colombia. Normally, such remitters would only have

to report transmissions of \$3,000 or more.

The GTO allowed the agents to gather reams of data. They found that many of the remitters were moving the same amounts as they had before the GTO, but were not reporting these transactions because they were structuring them beneath the \$750 threshold and fabricating the identity of the senders. In some cases, the agents learned that remitters

were picking random names for senders out of the Yellow Pages. The GTO data, along with information from other sources, gave the agents the probable cause needed to obtain and execute search warrants on several of the remitting firms. The results of those search warrants confirmed what ICE agents had suspected: The remitting firms were laundering massive amounts in drug proceeds for the Norte Valle Cartel.

The agents in New York followed the money trail, and by 2001 the investigation began to unravel the structure and hierarchy of the Norte Valle Cartel. The agents made more than a dozen arrests and got information from defendants and other confidential informants. With that information, they determined that Luis Hernando Gomez Bustamante, aka “Rasguno,” led the cartel.

When ICE became an agency in 2003, the investigation continued. Ultimately, ICE

Continued on Page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

3 ICE Represents U.S. On Global Task Force To Protect Children

4 ICE Deports Man Wanted For Inciting Racial Hatred In Germany

4 ICE Arrests Eight In Houston For Sex Trafficking Scheme

5 ICE Efforts Bring Ancient Work Of Art Back To Italy

5 ICE Arrests 125 Illegal Aliens At Wal-Mart Construction Site

6 ICE Most Wanted

6 Border Tunnel

ICE, Colombians Dismantle Norte Valle Cartel

Continued from Page 1

agents were able to identify and bring charges against the leaders of the Norte Valle Cartel. Gomez-Bustamante, Arcangel de Jesus Henao Montoya (aka “El Mocho,” the second-in-command), and Wilmer Varela (an enforcer) were charged in various indictments during 2002–2004. Also charged were Jhonny Cano-Correa (another cartel enforcer), Aldemar Rendon-Ramirez, Dagoberto Rios-Flores, aka “Chuma,” and other key cartel leaders.

These indictments alleged that between 1990 and 2004, the Norte Valle Cartel was responsible for exporting more than 1.2 million pounds of cocaine to the United States, worth roughly \$10 billion. The cartel was considered the largest and most feared drug organization in Colombia, responsible for roughly 30 to 50 percent of the cocaine smuggled to the United States. Additional indictments accused the Norte Valle Cartel of using the Auto-defensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), a paramilitary organization

in Colombia, to protect its drug smuggling routes. The United States government has designated AUC as a foreign terrorist organization.

Following the indictments, with the help and cooperation of foreign governments, ICE went after the Norte Valle Cartel’s leadership:

- On Jan. 15, 2004, Henao Montoya, the cartel’s second-in-command, was captured in Panama and expelled to the United States. He arrived on a plane in New York where he was arrested by ICE agents.
- On July 2, 2004, Gomez-Bustamante, the leader of the cartel, was detained by Cuban authorities after entering that nation on a false passport. He is thought to be in custody in Cuba.
- On Dec. 28, 2004, Rios-Flores, aka “Chuma,” was arrested outside Medellin, Colombia, by



ICE agents escort Arcangel de Jesus Henao Montoya, aka “El Mocho,” center, the second-in-command of the Norte Valle Cartel, following his arrival in New York. He was arrested and expelled to the United States by authorities in Panama.

Colombian authorities. He awaits extradition to the United States.

- On July 14 of this year, Jose Aldemar Rendon-Ramirez, a key cartel finance officer, was arrested outside Medellin. He too awaits extradition to the United States.

The arrest of Cano-Correa was the latest blow to the Norte Valle Cartel. Colombian authorities found grenades, grenade launchers, assault weapons and ammunition inside the ranch.

Cano-Correa was taken to Bogotá for processing and then transported to a high-security prison in Colombia. The arrest was the result of a joint coordinated information-sharing effort by the Colombian National Police, the ICE Attaché in Bogotá and the Drug Enforcement Administration in Bogotá.

Cano-Correa was known as an enforcer for, and one of the most violent and dangerous members of, the Norte Valle Cartel. After the arrest of several cartel leaders, he is believed to have assumed an increasingly prominent role for the cartel. Colombian authorities believe he had essentially become the number three man in the cartel, overseeing financing and finding new smuggling routes. ■

A Link To Murder

In January 1997, legacy U.S. Customs agents began executing about 35 search warrants on money-remitting firms, including three on a business in Queens called Tele-Austin. The agents found documents at these three locations indicating that between 1993 and 1997 about \$70 million in drug proceeds was laundered through Tele-Austin and sent to Colombia. The owner of the Tele-Austin businesses fled to Colombia after the search warrants were served, but was arrested by the agents in August 1997 in Miami. The agents quickly determined that he was merely a front, and that the true owner of Tele-Austin was Juan Alberto Monsalve, aka “El Loco,” who was in Colombia.

The link to Monsalve was a link to murder. The agents found evidence that

Monsalve had ordered two homicides in Queens over unpaid drug debts. Agents also gathered evidence indicating that Monsalve was the New York representative for Colombia’s Norte Valle Cartel. Monsalve was indicted for the murders in Queens, for laundering roughly \$70 million in drug proceeds and for smuggling roughly 30,000 kilograms of cocaine into the United States. In March 2000, Monsalve crossed the Mexican border into the United States. Four days later, the agents arrested him in New York City. Monsalve eventually pleaded guilty to one of the homicides and the drug trafficking charges. A federal judge sentenced him to two life sentences. Monsalve’s arrest and conviction was a key to unravelling the structure and hierarchy of the Norte Valle Cartel.

ICE Represents U.S. On Global Task Force To Protect Children

BELFAST, U.K.—Acting Assistant Secretary John P. Clark announced November 15 that ICE will serve as a board member and the primary U.S. law enforcement representative to the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT), an integrated network of law enforcement agencies from different nations created to combat online child abuse.

Mr. Clark's announcement came as he and other senior ICE officials participated in the first international summit of the VGT in Belfast, where law enforcement officials, non-governmental organizations and private industry representatives from around the world gathered to share strategies in reducing online child abuse. Participants discussed the problems and risks of Internet child abuse; recognized model industry efforts to combat this problem; and developed new strategies to reduce the incidence of child abuse online.

Created in 2003, the VGT is a law enforcement-to-law enforcement network comprised of ICE, the Australian High-Tech Crime Centre; the United Kingdom's National Crime Squad, Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Interpol. The deputy director general of the United Kingdom's National Crime Squad is the current chair of the VGT, a position that rotates every two years between member law enforcement agencies. Supporting the VGT member agencies are non-governmental organizations and private industry representatives from —member nations.

As a board member, ICE is working with other VGT representatives to implement a 24/7 online presence by law enforcement to combat child

abuse. Under this system, one nation's member agency on the task force will essentially serve as the on-call, Internet police officer for the globe for a portion of each day. After the completion of one "shift," the responsibility will rotate to the next VGT member agency from another nation for the next shift that day. ICE will be working with other board members to facilitate access to the VGT Web site to ensure that any leads received during a "shift" can be reviewed and quickly forwarded to the correct member nation. Once implemented, this concept will truly create a virtual global task force.

As part of its board member duties, ICE is also responsible for bringing U.S. Internet providers, other American companies, as well as U.S. non-governmental organizations, into partnership with the VGT. In addition, ICE attends VGT meetings three times per year to approve new members, as well as to review new and modified initiatives of the task force.

"The VGT is an outstanding international effort —to address online child abuse and one that ICE —is deeply committed to," said Clark. "With child —sex predators moving seamlessly through the virtual borders of the world, cooperation between law enforcement agencies around the globe has never been more important."

ICE's participation in the VGT stems directly from ICE's public safety mission, as well as its authority to investigate trans-border crimes. Through Operation Predator, ICE systematically targets Internet child pornographers, international child sex tourists, foreign national



John P. Clark

pedophiles and human sex traffickers. This initiative draws on the full spectrum of ICE's intelligence, investigative, cyber, and detention and removal functions to safeguard children against predators.

Since the launch of Operation Predator in June 2003, ICE has arrested more than 6,500 child sex predators nationwide. ■

Inside ICE is an e-newsletter produced by the ICE Office of Public Affairs to inform the public about the mission, operations and activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

ICE Deports Man Wanted For Inciting Racial Hatred In Germany

CHICAGO—A man wanted in Germany for inciting racial hatred by denying that thousands of Jews were gassed to death at Auschwitz was deported by ICE November 14.



Germar Scheerer

The man is Germar Rudolf, aka Germar Scheerer, 41, a well-known revisionist and holocaust denier. The action ends a decade spent on the lam as Scheerer traversed the globe, living in Spain,

Great Britain, Mexico and finally the United States.

“ICE is focused on protecting America and promoting public safety by ensur-

ing that fugitive aliens are removed from the United States as expeditiously as possible,” said Deborah Achim, field officer director for Chicago’s detention and removal program. “We are restoring integrity to the immigration system by finding and removing individuals ordered deported by federal immigration judges.”

Rudolf is wanted in Germany for his 1995 conviction of inciting racial hatred in violation of Germany’s Holocaust denial legislation, which was enacted to combat anti-

Semitism and protect the memory of Hitler’s victims. He fled Germany in 1996 to avoid imprisonment.

Rudolf, a former chemist from Stuttgart and author of “Dissecting the Holocaust,” was sentenced by the German government to 14 months in prison for publishing a “scientific” report refuting the deaths of thousands of Jews in the gas chambers at Auschwitz. Rudolf tested bricks in the gas chambers for traces of Zyklon B, deadly cyanide used to kill Jews during the Holocaust. His report claimed the mass gassing of Jews was unlikely. ■

ICE Arrests Eight In Houston For Sex Trafficking Scheme

HOUSTON, Texas—Eight Salvadoran nationals were arrested by ICE agents November 13 for their alleged roles in an organization that trafficked Latin American females, including minors, into the United States and forced them into sexual servitude.

The females were enticed with promises of good jobs in America, only to be forced to work as “bargirls” for minimal payment and the requirement that they submit to the sexual demands of the defendants, bar patrons and others. During the enforcement actions, ICE agents, working with the FBI and state and local law enforcement, encountered nearly 100 females who may be victims of the sex trafficking scheme.

The federal criminal complaint alleges that the eight defendants, all of them owners or operators of bars and nightclubs in the Houston area, were part of an organization responsible for enticing and then smuggling young women from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras into the United States across the Texas-Mexico border. The women were required to work at their businesses to pay off smuggling fees ranging from \$8,000 to \$13,000. Instead of the good jobs they were promised, the women were made to work as “bargirls,” sitting and dancing with customers and selling overpriced drinks to the men. The bars in question employed as many as 30 women in such a capacity at any given time.

According to the complaint, one young woman earned about \$500 to \$600 a week selling drinks to male customers. But after paying debts that included alien smuggling fees, food, housing, clothing and other miscellaneous items, she received approximately \$50 each week. In addition to the almost insurmountable debt, the complaint alleges that the defendants used threats of violence against the women and their families to control them and keep them working. The complaint alleges that the defendants compelled the woman and girls to submit to the sexual demands of the defendants, their close associates and bar patrons.

All eight defendants are charged with conspiring to

recruit, entice, harbor, transport, provide and obtain the women and girls, and then benefiting financially from participation in a venture that engaged in such acts, knowing that force, fraud and coercion would be used to cause these women and girls to engage in commercial sex acts. A charge of conspiracy carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

During the course of the law enforcement action, approximately 100 women from Central and South America were taken into ICE custody on various immigration related charges. The investigation continues. ■

ICE Efforts Bring Ancient Work Of Art Back To Italy

LOS ANGELES—A 2,300-year-old vase that was allegedly smuggled out of Italy and ended up in the Getty Museum's antiquities collection arrived in Rome last week, capping a joint effort by ICE, Italian authorities and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles to return the artifact to its original home.

Italian authorities traveled to Los Angeles and took possession of the ancient vase under a consent judgment negotiated by the United States Attorney's Office and signed by attorneys representing the Getty Museum. In that judgment, the Museum voluntarily agreed to return the krater to the Italian government. The vase was flown from Los Angeles to New York on November 8, where it was placed on a connecting flight to Rome.

The krater, considered one of the best works by renowned Italian vase painter Asteas, has an

appraised value of approximately \$350,000.

According to court records, the vase was unearthed by a laborer doing maintenance work on Italy's canals during the 1970s. Initially offered a price of one million lire, the worker told Italian authorities he ultimately traded the artifact to a notorious Italian antiquities trafficker in exchange for a pig.

In 1978, a former Getty curator saw the krater in Switzerland where it was held by a private owner and two years later arranged for the museum to bring it to the United States on loan. After three years, the Getty formally purchased the artifact from a European art dealer, Gianfranco Becchina, for \$275,000.

In 1999, Italian authorities made an official request to the United States government seeking return of the krater under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. In response, the United States

Attorney's Office in Los Angeles filed a forfeiture complaint last year naming the Asteas krater as the defendant, leading ICE to lodge a seizure warrant against the artifact. In mid-September attorneys for the Getty Museum signed off on the consent judgment, paving the way for the vase's return to Italy.

"ICE's mission is to prevent the illegal movement of people and goods across our nation's borders—be it human beings, high-tech weapons, narcotics, or works of art," said David Nehls, assistant special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in Los Angeles. "Seeing this vase returned to Italy is particularly gratifying because it represents an important part of that country's culture and history." In a statement issued by the



The krater, considered one of the best works by renowned Italian vase painter Asteas, was returned to Italy following ICE's work to recover and return the ancient work of art.

Italian Consulate in Los Angeles, Italian authorities expressed gratitude for the assistance and cooperation ICE provided throughout the entire operation.

The Italians intensified their efforts to secure the vase's return earlier this year because they maintain the artifact is a crucial piece of evidence in the trial of two Americans, Marion True, the former curator of antiquities at the Getty, and Robert E. Hecht Jr., a prominent U.S. art dealer, on charges of antiquities trafficking. ■

ICE Arrests 125 Illegal Aliens At Wal-Mart Construction Site

FRACKVILLE, Pa.—ICE agents executed federal search warrants November 17 on trailers belonging to five subcontracting companies working at the construction site of a new Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Butler Township, Pa.

The search warrants sought evidence of possible money laundering and harboring illegal alien charges

by the targeted companies. During the execution of the search warrants, ICE agents detained 125 illegal aliens shortly after they arrived to work at the construction site.

Those arrested were from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. All of those arrested were placed into removal proceedings. They

will have an opportunity to have their deportation cases heard before an impartial immigration judge.

"Employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens, and those who utilize false documents to gain employment, face significant criminal and administrative charges," said John Kelleghan, acting special agent-in-charge for ICE in Pennsylvania. "ICE's

goal is to restore integrity to the immigration system and keep our workplaces safe by ensuring that those who work there are who they say they are, and are not vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers."

ICE agents continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding the employment of these illegal aliens. ■



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.

Inside ICE

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ICE MOST WANTED

This Week's Featured Fugitive: Daniel Cercas-Manilla



ALIASES: Unknown	HEIGHT: 5'6"
DATE OF BIRTH: 01/06/1973	WEIGHT: 135 lbs.
PLACE OF BIRTH: Honey, Puebla, Mexico	HAIR: Black
SCARS/MARKS: Unknown	EYES: Brown
LAST KNOWN WHEREABOUTS: Ciudad Acuna, Mexico	
BACKGROUND: Daniel CERCAS-Manilla is wanted for questioning by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in connection with the May 2001 smuggling attempt that resulted in the death of 14 illegal aliens south of Welton, Arizona.	

If you have any information on the whereabouts of the above fugitive, please call **1-866-DHS-2ICE**
View more ICE Most Wanted online at: www.ice.gov/graphics/investigations/wanted/

Border Tunnel



An ICE agent examines the entrance to a border tunnel discovered late in the day November 16 near San Diego and the Otay Mesa port of entry. The tunnel investigation is a coordinated effort involving ICE, U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Border Patrol, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Agents determined the primitive passageway, which originated in Mexico, and extended about 90 feet into the United States, was not complete. Since 9/11, federal authorities have discovered at least 16 cross border tunnels along the U.S.-Mexico border in California and Arizona.